

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claim 7 and 18 to 32 without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and amend the claims as shown below. The claims, as pending in the subject application, read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus which is connected with an information communication apparatus, comprising:
  - first input means for entering ~~payment~~ identification information on an addressee of fee billing from said information communication apparatus;
  - memory control means for storing the ~~payment~~ identification information entered by said first input means in a memory;
  - second input means for entering an image;
  - addition means for adding the ~~payment~~ identification information stored in the memory by said memory control means to the image entered by said second input means in a manner not easily recognizable to human eyes;
  - discrimination means for discriminating whether said image is a specified image;
  - control means for controlling the addition by said addition means based on the result of discrimination by said discrimination means;
  - output means for outputting the image to which the ~~payment~~ identification information is added by said addition means; and

deletion means for deleting the ~~payment~~ identification information from the memory after said addition means adds the ~~payment~~ identification information to the entered image.

2. (Original) An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising second output means for outputting information based on the output of said outputted image to said information communication apparatus.

3. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said ~~payment~~ identification information on the addressee of fee billing includes information for specifying a company issuing a credit card, and information for specifying a user of said credit card.

4. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said ~~payment~~ identification information on the addressee of fee billing includes information for specifying a bank issuing a debit card, and information for specifying a user of said debit card.

5. (Original) An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said first input means further enters information for enabling activation of said image processing apparatus from said information communication apparatus, and said second input means starts the entry of said image after the entry of information for enabling activation of said image processing apparatus.

6. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said information based on the output of the image includes at least one of ~~the~~ information on ~~the~~ a sheet size, a color mode and a black-and-white mode.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said addition means further adds information specific to the image processing apparatus to the image.

9. to 12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) An image processing system composed of an information communication apparatus capable of communicating with an external server and an image processing apparatus, wherein:

said image processing apparatus comprises:

first input means for entering ~~payment~~ identification information on an addressee of fee billing from said information communication apparatus;

memory control means for storing the ~~payment~~ identification information entered by said first input means in a memory;

second input means for entering an image;

addition means for adding the payment identification information stored in the memory by said memory control means to the image entered by said second input means in a manner not easily recognizable to human eyes;

discrimination means for discriminating whether said image is a specified image;

control means for controlling the addition by said addition means based on the result of discrimination by said discrimination means;

first output means for outputting the image to which the payment identification information is added by said addition means; and

deletion means for deleting the payment identification information from the memory after said addition means adds the payment identification information to the entered image,

and said information communication apparatus comprises:

third input means for entering the payment identification information on the addressee of fee billing and a password;

third output means for outputting said payment identification information on the addressee of fee billing and said password to said external server;

fourth output means for outputting, to said image processing apparatus, said payment identification information on the addressee of fee billing according to a result of identification on said payment identification information on the addressee of fee billing and on said password performed in said external server;

fourth input means for entering information based on the output of the image from said image processing apparatus; and

fifth output means for outputting the information based on the output of said image to said external server.

14. (Currently Amended) An image processing method in an image processing apparatus connected with an information communication apparatus, the method comprising:

- a first input step of entering payment identification information on the addressee of fee billing from said information communication apparatus;
- a memory control step of storing the payment identification information entered by the first input step in a memory;
- a second input step of entering an image;
- an addition step of adding said payment identification information stored in the memory by said memory control step to the image entered by the second input step in a manner not easily recognizable to human eyes;
- a discrimination step of discriminating whether said image is a specified image;
- a control step of controlling the addition by said addition step based on the result of discrimination by said discrimination step;
- an output step of outputting the image to which the payment identification information is added by the addition step; and
- a deletion step of deleting the payment identification information from the memory after the addition step adds the payment identification information to the entered image.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently Amended) A computer readable storage medium on which are stored program codes for an image processing method in which an image processing apparatus is connected with an information communication apparatus, the program codes comprising:

a first input step for entering payment identification information on the addressee of fee billing from said information communication apparatus;

a memory control step for storing the payment identification information entered by said first input step in a memory;

a second input step for entering an image;

an addition step for adding said payment identification information stored in the memory by said memory control step to the image entered by said second input step in a manner not easily recognizable to human eyes;

a discrimination step of discriminating whether said image is a specified image;

a control step of controlling the addition by said addition step based on the result of discrimination by said discrimination step;

an output for outputting the image to which the payment identification information is added by the addition step; and

a deletion step for deleting the payment identification information from the memory after said addition step adds the payment identification information to the entered image.

17. to 32. (Canceled)

33. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus comprising:

image input means for entering an image;

information input means for entering predetermined information to be embedded in the image entered by said image input means;

memory control means for storing the predetermined information entered by said information input means in a memory;

inquiry means for inquiring to ~~the exterior~~ an external device whether the predetermined information stored in the memory by said memory control means is effective;

embedding means for embedding the stored predetermined information into the entered image if said inquiry means identifies that the predetermined information is effective;

discrimination means for discriminating whether said image is a specified image;

control means for controlling the embedding by said embedding means based on the result of discrimination by said discrimination means; and

deletion means for deleting the predetermined information from the memory after said embedding means embeds the predetermined information to the entered image.

34. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said ~~exterior~~ external device is a server computer.

35. (Original) An image processing apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said inquiry means inquires through a communication channel whether said predetermined information is effective.

36. (Currently Amended) An image processing method for an image processing apparatus, comprising:

an image input step of entering an image;

an information input step of entering predetermined information to be embedded in the image entered in the image input step;

a memory control step of storing the predetermined information entered by said information input ~~means~~ step in a memory;

an inquiry step of inquiring to ~~the exterior~~ an external device whether the predetermined information stored in the memory by the memory control step is effective;

an embedding step of embedding the stored predetermined information into the entered image if said inquiry step identifies that the predetermined information is effective;

a discrimination step of discriminating whether said image is a specified image;

a control step of controlling the embedding by said embedding step based on the result of discrimination by said discrimination step; and

a deletion step of deleting the predetermined information from the memory after said embedding step embeds the predetermined information to the entered image.

37. (Currently Amended) A computer readable storage medium on which are stored program codes for an image processing method of an image processing apparatus, the program codes comprising:

- an image input step for entering an image;
- an information input step for entering predetermined information to be embedded in the image entered by said image input ~~means~~ step;
- a memory control step for storing the predetermined information entered by said information input step in a memory;
- an inquiry step for inquiring to ~~the exterior~~ an external device whether the predetermined information stored in the memory by said memory control step is effective;
- an embedding step for embedding the predetermined information into the entered image if said inquiry step identifies that the predetermined information is effective;
- a discrimination step of discriminating whether said image is a specified image;
- a control step of controlling the embedding by said embedding step based on the result of discrimination by said discrimination step; and
- a deletion step for deleting the predetermined information from the memory after said embedding step embeds the predetermined information to the entered image.